

A
UNIONIST AGRICULTURAL
POLICY

BY A GROUP OF UNIONISTS

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1913

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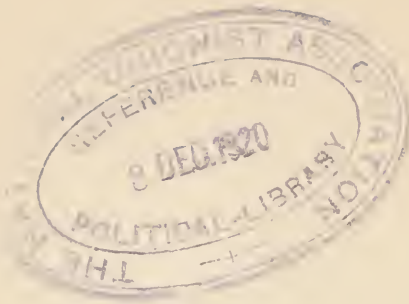
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A Unionist Agricultural Policy

THE following memorandum has been prepared by a number of Unionists, in and out of Parliament, and is an attempt to formulate a definite and comprehensive policy for the development of British agriculture.

I. ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH AGRICULTURE

The annual production of food in Great Britain is £151,000,000.¹ There can be no doubt that the output can be greatly increased, if a sound agricultural policy is pursued. In the year 1908, 1,673,000 men and women were engaged in agriculture in Great Britain. Of this number 500,000 were occupiers, and the remaining 1,173,000 were permanently employed as agricultural labourers. This means that 36 persons were employed per 1,000 acres of cultivated area.²

If we compare this figure with the amount

¹ The sum given is the value of the produce actually sold, and does not include the food produced and consumed on the holdings.

² These figures are taken from the Report on the Agricultural Output of Great Britain, 1912, Cd. 6277.

of employment per 1,000 acres in Denmark, a country where conditions are by no means dissimilar to our own, we shall find that Denmark employs upwards of 75 persons per 1,000 acres. If intensive methods of cultivation are more generally employed, there is no reason why the land of Great Britain should not find occupation and employment for a corresponding number of people. To put the contention in its most modest form, we might expect an increase of at least 500,000 men in the agricultural population, either as labourers or small-holders. Nor is such a view without justification from the history of the past. In 1851, in England and Wales, 1,712,739 persons were engaged in agriculture; fifty years later this number had fallen to 1,192,167, a decline of more than half a million. There seems to be no reason why, if prices remain steady, and if methods of cultivation are improved, we should not be able to revert to the original figure. The importance of this from the point of view of labour and production is obvious. It has been calculated that the annual food production per labourer is £129. On this basis, the increased labouring population would increase the production of home-grown food by upwards of £80,000,000 per annum. This is a decidedly conservative estimate, as the present average output is based very largely on an extensive system of cultivation, and as

cultivation becomes more and more intensive, the average will be proportionately raised.

We have thought it desirable to place this paragraph first in order to show the vast economic possibilities which underlie the revival of British agriculture, a revival which must, for reasons both of history and principle, be bound up in the most intimate manner with the fortunes of the Unionist Party.

II. NATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. *Maintenance of National Physique*

The agricultural population of the country is the backbone of its physique; and without physique no nation can in the long run survive. On this ground alone, if for no other reason, it has a claim to special consideration. Bismarck, the greatest example of the Tory-Constructive statesman, said in 1879, "If the time should come when corn cannot be profitably cultivated, not only agriculture but the Prussian State and the German Empire itself will go to ruin." The reasons for this judgment are fairly obvious. Both from a military and a social standpoint, industrial life drains the physique of the nation, and if a proper relation of population is not maintained between the two, the industrial demand will exceed the rural supply, and the nation will deteriorate as a whole.

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2. *The Development of Agriculture is one of the best Methods of Social Reform*

Low wages in agriculture, conjoined with other causes, keep wages down all round. The interaction between industrial and agricultural wages is proved by the Board of Trade chart on agricultural wages. Although in districts where town work competes with country work this competition tends to raise agricultural wages to a higher level than that obtaining in other districts, it is equally true that the general low standard of agricultural wages has an important effect in keeping down the wages of unskilled workers in the towns. The proper payment of agricultural labour as a competing element would, therefore, tend to raise wages in the towns ; and it is impossible to get good wages without agricultural prosperity.

3. *National Defence. Wheat Supply in Time of War*

There can be no doubt that whatever the fortunes of war on the high seas, there would be for a considerable period a restriction of our imported supply of wheat, coupled with an increase in prices. Such a situation might well lead to a food panic in our great industrial centres, except in so far as our local resources were able to meet the strain. The temporary dislocation of supplies during the railway strike last year may

be quoted in this connection, though the disturbance was temporary and far less aggravated than that which would be occasioned by a war with a strong naval Power. A panic on the price of foodstuffs in our great industrial centres might nullify the best-laid plan of naval and military campaign. The establishment of Government granaries has been suggested as a means of meeting this danger. It is submitted that such a remedy is insufficient, and that the only effective course is to increase the production of home-grown wheat. For these reasons, we identify ourselves with the views of Mr. Disraeli, who, as a private member, as a Minister, and as Prime Minister, claimed that agriculture had a special claim on the consideration of the State. Furthermore, we accept Mr. Disraeli's general and consistent opinion that great national industries should be protected or assisted when they need such protection or assistance, but not otherwise.

Following out this conception, we are perfectly prepared to accept any decision of the Unionist Party which gives to agriculture real security in the future—by which we mean the kind of security which would induce any reasonable person to invest his money, his brains, or his industry in it. The maintenance of stability and employment in all industries is the essence of Toryism. With this end in view it is necessary

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to provide every agriculturist, whether he be labourer, farmer, or landlord, with the requisite degree of security. In order to establish such security a tariff or bounties may in the end be found necessary. But substantial help for agriculture may be immediately afforded by the readjustment of local taxation and the other proposals with which we deal in the following pages.

III. THE NEED FOR A FULL POLICY

We have shown that the agricultural problem is a national problem; and it is of the utmost importance that the Unionist Party should be prepared with a policy which will afford a solution of the whole problem. The solution is not to be found in any one proposal. The difficulties to be overcome are too complex, and the needs to be met are too many, to admit of a single panacea. But it is essential that the statesman who attempts to solve the problem should be prepared with a scheme which embraces every aspect. He must have in his mind a complete scheme before he sets to work on the details of any particular part. So only can he hope to see the agricultural question in its true proportions, and to deal fairly with the different interests involved. For such a work the Unionist party is peculiarly fitted by its general conception of national policy, because

the Unionist party stands for State aid and encouragement of private enterprise as opposed to the Radical principles of State control and land nationalisation.

IV. THE LABOURER

Socially and economically the labourer is the root of the agricultural problem. It is characteristic of agriculture, distinguishing it from other industries, that the individual worker plays a more important part in its economy. It is common to talk of agricultural labourers as unskilled. In truth, a good agricultural labourer—who, owing to the present trend of agricultural development and the consequent emigration, is to-day much rarer than he ought to be—is essentially a skilled workman.

(a) *Wages*.—In many counties the great majority of labourers are ill-educated and ill-fed, and consequently inefficient, both mentally and physically. In other counties where the average wage paid is comparatively high some employers pay wages considerably below the average. The labourers have no effective organisation; and although some increase in wages is taking place in certain districts, those districts where wages are lowest appear to be hardly, if at all, affected by the movement. It, therefore, becomes necessary to establish some means of

raising wages to a subsistence level, in order that the labourer and his family may be adequately nourished, that the labourer may thereby be able to render efficient service, that his children may be in a condition to benefit properly by their education, and that the labourer may be able to pay a commercial rent for his cottage. The most practical method of raising wages is by the establishment of Agricultural Wages Boards as proposed by the Agricultural Employment Boards Bill.

In dealing with this proposal, several points of paramount importance must be noticed.

1. This is not a proposal to establish a minimum flat rate of wages throughout the country by Act of Parliament. It is a proposal to extend the working of the Trade Boards Act, of which the chief author was Lord Milner, to agricultural districts where wages are lower than those obtaining in districts where the soil and other conditions are not more favourable for agricultural development. Further, the new rate will not be fixed by Parliament at all, but by local joint Boards sitting in conference under an impartial chairman.

2. The Bill gives to these Boards a wide discretion, and the gradual raising of wages would be accompanied by an increased efficiency on the part of the worker.

3. The Bill provides for the exemption of

labourers who by reason of age, infirmity, or other exceptional causes are incapable of earning a living wage.

4. The provisions of the Bill encourage the extension of piecework, which is the surest method of obtaining good results and rewarding labour according to its merits.

5. This proposal is in no way to conflict with historic Tory doctrines, which were laid down at the time of the passing of the Factories Acts. The principle of Toryism is not that freedom of contract cannot be interfered with under any circumstances, but that it should not be interfered with unless the policy of allowing such freedom has failed to produce desirable results from the point of view of the State. In the case of agricultural wages, as in the case of the Factories Acts, the policy of *laissez faire* has produced results inimical to the race, and, therefore, the State, for its own preservation, is bound to step in. In the matter of social legislation, as in other directions, the worker in the country has received far less consideration than the worker in the towns.

We would ask those critics who are opposed to the establishment of Wages Boards to suggest some other scheme by which wages may be raised. The evil is admitted on all sides; and any constructive proposal is certain to receive full consideration. In the absence of a counter-

proposal we make a strong appeal to such critics to give the Wages Board their support, and to direct their criticism towards the improvement of the scheme. At the same time if there are some who, while unable to advance a concrete proposal, yet think that the remedy which we propose is powerless to remedy the disease, we are sure that their inability to accept this particular proposal will not prejudice their consideration of the other reforms which we advocate.

(b) *Reconstruction of Village Life*.—The necessity for offering the labourer an opportunity of acquiring an interest in the land, and thereby increasing his earnings, is of equal importance with a direct increase in wages. Such opportunities will create for the labourer a future on the land, and supply a stepping-stone to the acquisition of larger interests ; and they will check the tide of emigration which to-day runs highest in those very districts where the wages paid are sufficient to enable men to save money, while the lack of such opportunities encourages them to emigrate to countries where land is easily obtained.

Any one acquainted with the present conditions of life in an ordinary English village knows how unsatisfactory and disorganised they are.

However much a man may save, there are no opportunities for employing his savings in the village itself, and a labourer cannot be blamed if he decides that, so far as he is able, he will send

his children away to save them from the blind alley existence which he has led himself.

The number of cottages which stand on only two or three poles of ground is enormous, and yet within a stone's throw of them there is often a grass field or an arable field occupied by a farmer, the former containing the cows which produce the milk the villagers cannot buy, and the latter growing a poor crop of wheat or oats, and sometimes full of twitch and weeds. It is not surprising that the villagers become embittered when they see land, which they so sorely need themselves and could make good use of, badly farmed under their very noses. Resentment at such a state of things is at the bottom of most of the unrest and discontent among our rural population.

It is the existence of evils of this nature which gives agitators a chance of catching the popular ear with their sweeping and unpractical proposals. It must be the task of those who have greater knowledge, and at least equal sympathy, to reconstruct our village life and increase the interests and opportunities of those living in the villages.

For this purpose, land near the village must be available for every deserving inhabitant. Every cottage should have at least one quarter of an acre of garden, and there must be a sufficient supply of land for allotments; but

further, and perhaps most important of all, a sufficient amount of pasture land must be set aside as a common cow pasture.

It is important to distinguish between the man who wants land adjoining a cottage as accommodation land, or as a means of supplementing his wage, and the man who wishes to become a bona fide small-holder and to make his whole living off his land. The functions of providing the two classes of land are distinct, and it will probably be found necessary to alter and extend the provisions of the Small Holdings Act dealing with the provision of allotments. The need is urgent, but Parish Councils are slow to move. Much can be done by the voluntary efforts of landowners, but such assistance is necessarily sporadic and unequal. We think that the only thorough method of attaining the desired end is by the direct intervention of the Board of Agriculture. The Board would appoint a representative in each district, assisted by a co-opted committee, which might well consist of members of the County Council known to be interested in the question, to consider the needs and requirements of each village in the district and draw up schemes. These schemes, after receiving the sanction of the Board, would be put into execution by the Parish Council. The necessary powers of compulsory purchase would, of course, be vested in the Board or the Parish Council.

V. HOUSING

As has been pointed out, even after the establishment of Wages Boards it is improbable that wages will be raised for some considerable time in the lowest paid districts to a level which will enable the labourer both to feed and clothe adequately himself and his family and to pay an economic rent for his cottage. The housing problem is so immediate that new cottages must be provided without delay. It is unreasonable and useless to expect that the dearth of cottages will be met to any large extent by private enterprise. And experience has shown that local authorities are unwilling to build, unless assisted by the State, in what they rightly consider a national work. It is, therefore, necessary that annual grants should be made to local authorities as provided by the Unionist Housing Bill. That Bill would, at the lowest estimate, provide the rural districts with 125,000 cottages if its administration were carried out effectually; and such a number of cottages would go far to meet the existing admitted shortage. The necessity of providing cottagers with gardens and allotments has already been discussed.

Schemes might also be considered in this connection for the housing of town artisans in the country. How desirable it is for urban workers to have a little land to give them occupation

and supply their families with produce when work is slack is clearly shown by the effect that this development has had in Belgium.

VI. EDUCATION

Increased wages and improved housing accommodation will do much to keep men on the land ; but in order that the land may be developed to the best advantage by those who live upon it, it is necessary to provide suitable education by efficient teachers and to extend the provision of small holdings on practical lines.

Extensive changes must be made in the existing system of education with a view to strengthening those portions of the present method which are thoroughly sound and make for good.

This subject can best be dealt with under four separate headings :

(a) *The Teacher*.—The production of the right type of teacher is of the first importance. The present system is unsatisfactory. Young men and girls go into the training colleges, take the full course, go out into the profession, and may then be found to have no turn whatever for teaching. The work must begin from the bottom. Children who show aptitude must be chosen while they are at school ; their inclination and capacity for teaching tested during subsequent years up to the age of eighteen as

pupil teachers; and then, if found satisfactory, they should be sent on to the training college.¹

There must be a national system of training colleges sufficient to train effectively all would-be teachers. The training must be more practical and less academic than at present. A certain modicum of rural economy should be taught to all teachers as a subject without which the training of any teacher is incomplete; and while it may be important to give greater facilities for access to the Universities, it is the training college that must turn out the type of teacher now required to bring English education into line with the requirements of the time.²

(b) *Elementary Education*.—This need only be mentioned here briefly. In town and country alike it must be made more practical, and the manual method must be adopted. Where this method is adopted by capable teachers the result is entirely beneficial. The children acquire more initiative, and show an increasing interest and intelligence in their work; and parents welcome the method and become more interested in their children's education.³

To secure for rural districts an adequate supply of efficient teachers more inducements must

¹ A practical scheme on these lines has been drawn up by Mr. Walter Birkett, the school inspector of the Lindsey C.C.

² See the Report of the Rural Education Conference, 1911, Cd. 5773.

³ See Seventh Report Rural Education Conference, 1913, Cd. 6571.

be offered. At present there are marked differences in the salaries paid by different local authorities. The salaries of urban and rural teachers must be more closely approximated; and uniformity in the salaries paid in different districts must be achieved. And finally, if possible, a system of registration should be instituted which would ensure steady promotion, and thus make rural schools more attractive to clever teachers than they are at present.

Every facility must be afforded for suitable children to go on to the secondary school or to the higher elementary school. But while advocating the provision of numerous ladders by means of which such children may ascend, the point of greatest importance is to construct a broad road of education which will lead the average children on to better things.

(c) *Continuation Instruction*.—Whatever may be the case in towns, any scheme for raising the school age of country children beyond the age of fourteen is impracticable and undesirable in rural districts. But continued instruction is necessary in order that advantage may be taken of the reforms which we have advocated. The beneficial results of such instruction are strongly evidenced in Denmark, Sweden, and Switzerland. Evening continuation schools are not suited to rural districts; the distances are too great, and the pupils are too tired. The neces-

sary instruction can be best given in centralised continuation day schools, which children would attend either two afternoons or two mornings in the week.¹ In thinly populated districts the instruction might be given by travelling teachers.

(d) *Adult Education*.—Instruction for the adult agriculturist must also be developed in every direction. In the past it was designed too much for the large farmer, and too little thought was given to the small farmer and labourer. It was also expected that the farmer would come to education, whereas it must be realised that education must be brought to the farmer.

Demonstration farms could, and must, be made to play a very important part in such education. The demonstration farm is an institution distinct from the experimental farm. The latter is a purely scientific institution for the development of agricultural knowledge. The former is intended to supply a full demonstration of scientific and up-to-date methods applied on a commercial scale at a farm of reasonable size.

In every district there are farms which are not paying anything like so well as they might be made to pay if modern knowledge of cropping, administration, and machinery were applied. The object of the demonstration farm is to demonstrate these better methods applied in practice : in other words, to show in each district

¹ See Report of Rural Education Conference, 1911, Cd. 5774, par. 16.

how to make the most money out of the farms—small as well as large. No doubt certain farms have been in the past, or are to-day, admirably run, and large profits made. But the general adoption of the methods which made these individual successes has not followed: and it is the system of demonstration farms which alone will secure that general levelling up of our methods of farming. Such farms may also be utilised as instructional or apprenticeship farms for the training of promising labourers' sons of fourteen to eighteen years old, as is being done to-day by the Government of New South Wales. There is no reason why such a farm should not be within the reach of every farmer in England. And, in truth, it is essential we should have such a system of demonstration farms if we are to utilise to the full the very valuable services of the Agricultural Organisers now being appointed by the County Councils throughout England.

The question of this adult instruction is closely connected with that of small holdings, and will be referred to again under that head.

Agricultural Education and Government Grants

The grants in aid of agricultural education are wholly inadequate, and are again evidence of the systematic way in which injustice is continually the lot of agriculture. The Central Authority contributes less than 15 per cent.

(including grants to colleges) of the total expenditure on education beneficial to agriculture. To put agricultural education on the same footing as general education, the contribution should be 50 per cent. In actual figures the counties spend about £80,000 a year¹ in agricultural education; the Government contributions are £12,000. To secure a system of agricultural education that is necessary a much larger sum will in time be required; but it must be a gradual development.

In addition to the suggestions already made, all possible encouragement should be given to the work of the Workers' Educational Association in country districts. The spread of education by and among groups of men and women working together in the classes of the Workers' Educational Association will assist the idea and practice of co-operation in other matters, a fact which appears to have been already appreciated by the Agricultural Organisation Society.

VII. SMALL HOLDINGS

While it must be recognised that education must be the basis of rural regeneration, there is no use in raising the educational standard of the rural children unless those who decide to remain have greater opportunities of advancement than they have at present.

¹ Cf. 1909, Cd. 4569.

It is commonly said that small holdings are uneconomic and have to be artificially created. It is very important to understand that there are districts in England where small holdings are economic. There would be vastly larger districts where they would be economic if the conditions favourable to agriculture generally which we advocate were created.

There is at present no small holdings tradition such as exists on the Continent. The majority of small-holders do not crop their holdings as small holdings should be cropped; they do not understand the use of artificial manures; they do not know how to market or to buy to the best advantage. And it is really to be wondered that our small-holders have maintained themselves to the extent they have.

Under the Small Holdings Act of 1908, the development has been slow and the administration of the County Councils unsatisfactory. The chief failing of the Act is that it has forced upon all County Councils the duty of developing small holdings whether or no they have land really suitable for the purpose. The second failing of the Act is that it does not clearly distinguish between the case of the bona fide holder, who is going to make his entire living off his holding, and the man who either wants accommodation land or a few additional acres to augment his present holding. The failure in administration is

due to the fact that even where the County Council Small Holdings Committees are not actively or passively hostile to small holdings, they do not feel such a responsibility in regard to duties which have been thrust upon them as to approach the matter as a problem of great national importance. In fact, it is doubtful whether a committee of a County Council is the right body to deal with the development of small holdings. The County Councils are buying land in scattered and isolated pieces at great expense and with too little advantage; and they are settling men on the land in the way least calculated to secure their success, instead of buying large areas of land in suitable places and settling the men in colonies. The Colony System is the one and only system by which the bona fide small-holder ought to be developed.

Small holdings serve many purposes and must vary in character according to the district. We have at Fairby an example of what a small holding colony can do in a fruit-growing and market-gardening district. There are a central dépôt and staff, the functions of which are to develop uncultivated land and supply small-holders with help and advice.

The Cheshire County Council have given an interesting demonstration of the colony system applied to larger farms in a dairy district. The total acreage of their colonies is 3,277 acres.

The following table shows the change effected by the conversion of this area into small holdings :

	Before conversion	After conversion
People	98	432
Cattle	803	1489
Horses	84	190
Pigs	180	690
Poultry	720	3880

Perhaps the most interesting colony system has been developed in Sweden, where they have acted upon the important principle that the initial years of the small-holder's occupancy must be made as easy as possible in regard to the annual payments.¹ Not only has this principle been ignored in the development of English small holdings, but the reverse is actually the case.

Colonies of small holdings are of value not only for the purpose of settling on the land promising young labourers, who are now drifting into towns or emigrating to the colonies, and attracting back to the country men who were originally brought up in the country, and who often prove successful cultivators of the soil if they are fortunate enough to get back there under suitable conditions, as has been proved in the U.S.A., but also for the purpose of giving employment to casual agricultural labourers.

It is essential to the success of the colony that

¹ See Report of Departmental Committee on Small Holdings, 1913, Cd. 6708, p. 44.

the necessary instruction and guidance should be provided for the small-holders. In every case there should be a resident agricultural instructor in the colony to guide the cultivators and advise them as to the best methods of dealing with their holdings ; and the educational arrangements previously suggested should be so devised as to supply teaching of a suitable character.

VIII. CO-OPERATION

Co-operation must play an increasingly important part as the work of organising the agricultural industry proceeds. This is essential in the case of small-holders ; and it is hardly necessary to point out how much greater are the chances of successful co-operation in the case of a colony than in the case of isolated holdings. We are aware that at present many English farmers are disinclined to co-operate and that not a few attempts in this direction have been unsuccessful. There are, however, many successful examples, which will, in time, have their effect ; and every effort must be made to induce the cultivator to take advantage of the means of co-operation.

Credit Banks should be established as the chief and first practical step in the development of co-operation. The fact that mutual guarantee forms a first-class security is not sufficiently appreciated

in England. If Credit Societies or Banks could be started throughout the country (and further, could receive the voluntary support of the existing banks in a really effective manner), it would be better and more desirable than any direct State intervention. If voluntary effort fails, then State guarantee will have to be resorted to.

IX. LAND PURCHASE

The facilities for the acquisition of land should not be confined to small-holders. There have been considerable sales of land in recent years ; and the process is likely to continue.

The principle of Mr. Jesse Collings's Bill should be adopted, under which the State is empowered to advance the whole of the purchase money, such advances being repaid by annual instalments of principal and interest. We think that direct State action is preferable to the establishment of land banks ; and as the sales will be gradual and extend over a long period of years, there will be no necessity to raise large loans in any year.

The proposal that tenants for life should be entitled to retain a percentage of the purchase money of settled land deserves consideration.

Land Transfer.—The transfer of land should be facilitated by an effective method of land registration.

X. LOCAL AND IMPERIAL TAXATION

The development of agriculture is handicapped by the unfair burden of local and Imperial taxation which falls upon land. Not only is the income tax payable in respect of land levied in almost all cases on a sum which exceeds the net income received, but the entire burden of local rates (amounting to something like 6s. 1d. in the £) falls upon land alone. With a view to removing the unfair pressure of local taxation, the incidence of local and Imperial taxation must be readjusted.

The cost of public services such as main roads, asylums, police and a larger proportion of the cost of education, should be defrayed out of the Imperial taxes. The most recent figures available prove the unfair proportion of the expenditure of local authorities upon these services.

	Imperial Expenditure	Local Expenditure	Total
	£	£	£
Main Roads	836,000	2,026,000	3,069,000
Asylums .	1,200,000	2,250,000	4,100,000
Police . .	2,601,767	3,855,797	7,401,423
Education .	13,330,000	14,260,000	27,590,000

The increased taxation should be imposed equally upon realty and personalty. In this connection it may be suggested that landowners keeping proper accounts ought to have the option of making income tax returns under Schedule D.

XI. THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

The Board of Agriculture must be greatly strengthened and developed. Its present income of £158,000 is altogether inadequate. To place our Board on a level with foreign agricultural departments, and to enable it to discharge the duties arising from the proposed agricultural development, will require an income of about £1,000,000. The existence of the Development Fund does not do away with the need for increasing the income of the Board of Agriculture. In fact the working of the Development Commission shows that it ought to be abolished, or that a portion of its funds ought to be transferred to the Board of Agriculture for the purpose of initiating agricultural development in various directions.

XII. TRANSPORT

The facilities for the transport of agricultural produce must be improved. The improvement of transport conditions mainly depends on two factors: (1) on the relative rate between home and imported produce; (2) on co-operative methods of supplying railways with the produce. The present system tends to discriminate in favour of the foreigner. In some, but not all, cases this discrimination is justified by the companies on the ground that large shipments of

produce at the ports can be transported by the railway companies at a greater profit than the consignments sent from country districts. This differentiation against home produce ought to be checked. At the same time, co-operation in the consignment of produce at home stations ought to make good any possible loss to the railway companies. Two further suggestions have been made in this connection : (1) that home produce should have a preferential rate, and (2) that questions relating to the transport of agricultural produce ought to be transferred from the Board of Trade to the Board of Agriculture.

Additional transport facilities could also be provided by the maintenance and increased use of canals and waterways and by the development of light railways and motor traction.

XIII. POOR LAW REFORM

Putting the land to its full potential use will have the most important effect on the question of destitution. The 235,000 destitute children now brought up at the public expense should so far as possible be trained in such a way as to become fitted for a career on the land either in England or the colonies.

XIV. MARKETING

Without unduly interfering with the middleman, much might be done in the way of more efficient

organisation of markets. In the first place, access to present markets should be improved. Secondly, a system should be developed for giving the producer telephonic communication regarding the state of markets, so as to minimise the effect of gluts. Thirdly, free markets, either municipal or co-operative, might be established, or, at all events, a Government Commissioner should be appointed in each market, who should publish a true and official price list, upon which commissions should be charged. Lastly, the parcels post might do much more than at present.

XV. SUBSIDIARY INDUSTRIES

Agricultural industries such as sugar, tobacco, bacon, crude alcohol, creameries, and pulping mills should receive more encouragement than they have received in the past. This encouragement might be given by the adjustment of the existing tariff for the benefit of such industries, and by assistance from the Development Fund through the medium of the Development Societies now being created.

XVI. FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS

Finally, as has been pointed out at the beginning of this memorandum, some arrangement of our fiscal system, whether internal or

external, should be carried out which will give to agriculture reasonable security.

We believe that by the scheme put forward in these pages the efficiency of the farmer and the labourer would be almost doubled. If this were done, and the undue burden of rating taken off agriculture, the output of that industry would be increased to an enormous extent ; the drain of our citizens from land to towns would be vastly diminished ; a greater number of people would make their homes on the soil ; and the State would regain an element of stability which has been lost to it for too many years.

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